

Broken

by

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"BROKEN"

FADE IN:

INT. AUTOPSY ROOM - NIGHT

A scalpel, inserted below the adam's apple, carves an incision down the sternum, around the navel, to the pubic bone. The skin parts, but there is little blood.

The buzz of an electric saw. A rib spreader.

Pathologist DR. EMILY COOPER examines the chest cavity. In her late thirties, she is smart, professional, and a little sad.

Emily slides an overhead light into place and sets to work.

The creak of a door opening.

JACK (O.S.)
How are you doing this evening,
Emily?

Detective JACK TAYLOR, early forties, a charmer with a sly smile, stands at the door.

Emily answers him without looking up.

EMILY
Detective Taylor, what brings you
to my lab?

JACK
Your patient.

EMILY
I wasn't aware he was one of yours.
Is this a homicide investigation?

JACK
You tell me.

Jack edges closer and takes a peek. He is repulsed but unable to look away.

JACK
I hate the circus.

INT. FREAK SHOW TENT - NIGHT

Painted muslin banners, promising all manner of humanity and entertainment, hang in the shadows behind an old CARNIVAL BARKER as he works the stage.

CARNIVAL BARKER
Step closer. Don't be afraid.

Torches cast an eerie, flickering light as a small crowd gathers at the foot of the stage.

CARNIVAL BARKER
In our travels to the far corners
of the earth, we have discovered
wonders and horrors far beyond
imagining. Tonight, we begin with
the lovely and impossibly twisted,
Annabella.

ANNABELLA, a young beauty, cartwheels onto the stage. A gypsy song plays as she rhythmically contorts, her supple body bending into seemingly impossible poses.

WILLIAM, middle-aged, with a sweet and simple face, watches from the wings. Unseen, he rocks back and forth to the music, keeping time with her performance.

His eyes never leave her.

INT. AUTOPSY ROOM - NIGHT

Jack hovers alongside Emily.

EMILY
Do you mind? You're blocking my
light.

JACK
You smell good. What is it?

EMILY
Disinfectant.

JACK
It's nice.

EMILY
Shouldn't you be home with your
wife, Jack?

JACK
You never cared about her before.

EMILY
I didn't know about her before.

Jack steps back.

JACK
Touché.

Emily resumes her examination of the organs.

EMILY

Ow!

Emily quickly withdraws her hand from the cadaver.

She runs her gloved hand under the faucet. There is a slight tear. She squeezes her finger and a drop of blood forms.

She returns to the body. Carefully, she reaches down into the intestines and retrieves a piece of glass.

INT. FREAK SHOW TENT - NIGHT

The crowd applauds as Annabella leaves the stage. She smiles at William. As she walks past him, he speaks far too quietly to be heard.

WILLIAM

You were wonderful.

He watches her as she vanishes into the night. Behind him, the Carnival Barker begins to introduce the next act.

CARNIVAL BARKER

Now we bring you a man with a talent so disturbing, those of you with a weak constitution may wish to avert your eyes. Some say his mother bred with a goat. I give you... The Human Garbage Can.

William hears his name called and walks onto the stage.

The crowd is unimpressed.

William takes a light bulb from his pocket and bites down on it, shattering the glass in his mouth. He chews briefly and then swallows it all down with the screw cap as a chaser.

The crowd applauds.

CARNIVAL BARKER

Perhaps someone in the audience would like to offer up an object. Come now, don't be shy.

A woman holds up a small brass button. The Carnival Barker takes it and tosses it towards William. William snatches it out of the air like a frog and it disappears down his gullet.

CARNIVAL BARKER

Surely someone has something more challenging than that.

A man holds up a coin, a large fifty-cent piece.

INT. AUTOPSY ROOM - NIGHT

The same coin is removed from William's bowels and Emily drops it into a stainless steel bowl with a clang. It comes to rest next to the button and the remains of the light bulb.

JACK

Jesus, that's one hell of a diet.
So, is that what killed him?

EMILY

No. It was his heart.

EXT. CIRCUS - NIGHT

It's late and the circus has shut down for the night. The Carnival Barker and William stand in the shadows.

CARNIVAL BARKER

Are you sure you want to do this -
spend your life savings on a girl?

William hands him a wad of cash.

CARNIVAL BARKER

I can clearly see you are a man
whose mind is made up.

The Carnival Barker gives William a tiny jewelry box.

INT. ANNABELLA'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Annabella sits in front of her dressing mirror. William paces behind her.

WILLIAM

I never was good with words. I
guess I never had much to say to
anyone. But, I have so much I want
to say to you. I love you with all
my heart. I always have. Since
that first time you smiled at me.
Anyway, that's what I wanted to
say. Well, that and this.

He kneels before her and opens the jewelry box.

WILLIAM

Will you marry me?

INT. AUTOPSY ROOM - NIGHT

Emily turns her back on Jack.

JACK
His heart?

EMILY
Myocardial infarction.

JACK
In English, please.

EMILY
Common, everyday, heart failure.

JACK
Well, I guess there's nothing else
for me here then.

EMILY
I guess not.

INT. WILLIAM'S TRAILER - NIGHT

William sits alone in his trailer drinking from a bottle of red wine. The wedding ring is in his hand.

He swallows the ring and takes the last gulp of wine. He hurls the empty bottle at the wall, shattering it.

A moment of quiet despair.

Suddenly, his face in anguish, he clutches at his heart and slowly crumples to the floor.

His eyes are empty.

INT. AUTOPSY ROOM - NIGHT

Jack is gone.

Emily removes her gloves and tosses them in the trash. She reaches into the stainless steel bowl and picks up the ring. The diamond sparkles.

Her eyes well with tears.

FADE OUT.